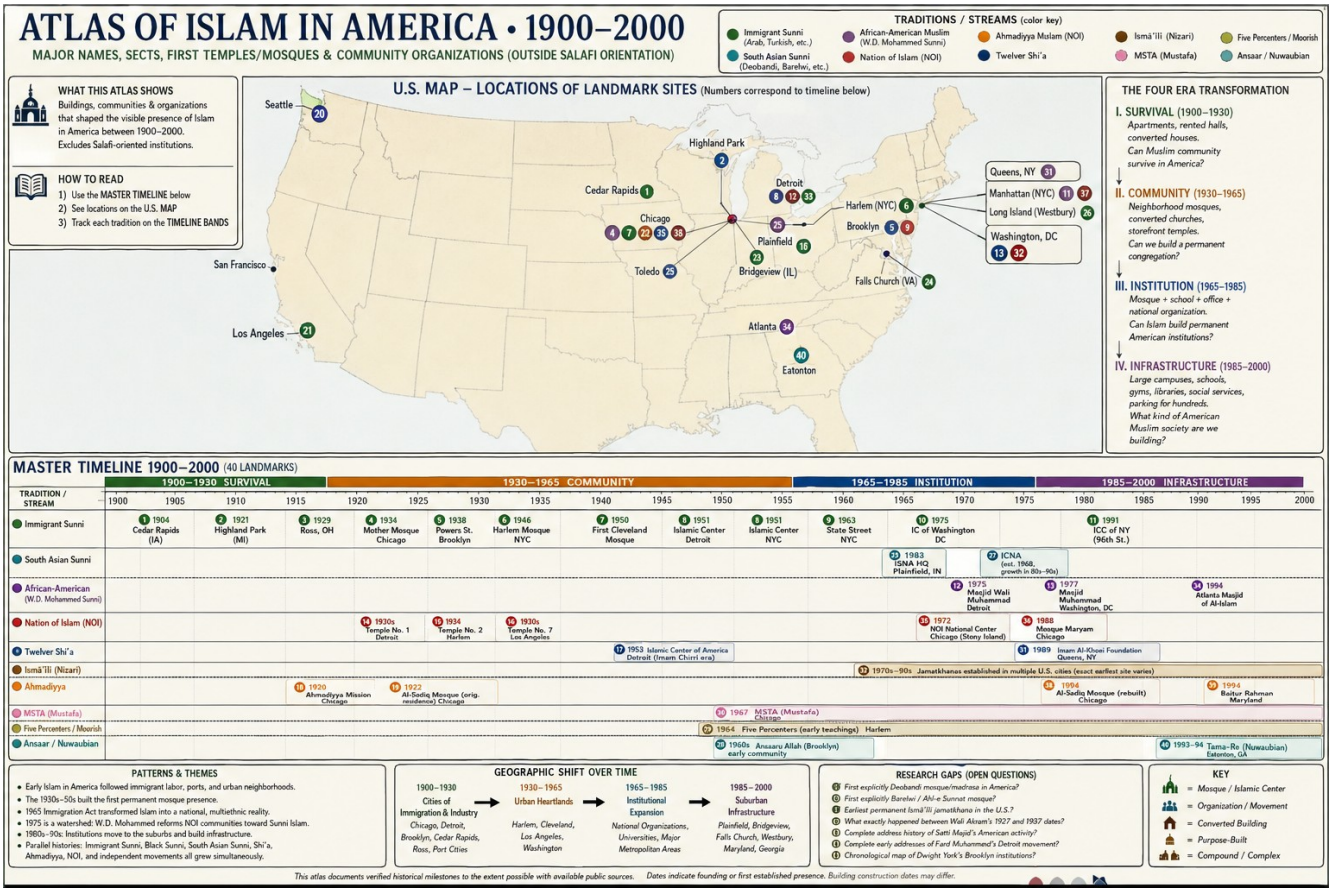
ATLAS OF ISLAM IN AMERICA

People, Movements, Mosques, Temples, and Institutions 1900-2000

A visual and documentary roadmap of Sunni immigrant communities, independent African-American Sunni communities, Shi'i institutions, Ahmadiyya, Moorish Science, Nation of Islam, Five Percenters, MSA/ISNA, Tablighi networks, W.D. Mohammed communities, and Ansaar/Nuwaubian developments.

Scope note: Salafi-oriented institutions are intentionally excluded from this edition.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MAJOR NAMES, SECTS, FIRST TEMPLES/MOSQUES & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (OUTSIDE SALAFI ORIENTATION)
TRADITIONS / STREAMS (color key)
Immigrant Sunni (Arab, Turkish, etc.)
South Asian Sunni (Deobandi, Barelwi, etc.)
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Nation of Islam (NOI)
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Five Percenters / Moorish
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Buildings, communities & organizations that shaped the visible presence of Islam in America between 1900–2000. Excludes Salafi-oriented institutions.
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1) Use the MASTER TIMELINE below
2) See locations on the U.S. MAP
3) Track each tradition on the TIMELINE BANDS
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THE FOUR ERA TRANSFORMATION
I. SURVIVAL (1900–1930)
Apartments, rented halls, converted houses. Can Muslim community survive in America?
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III. INSTITUTION (1965–1985)
Mosque + school + office + national organization. Can Islam build permanent American institutions?
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Early Islam in America followed immigrant labor, ports, and urban neighborhoods.
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A First explicitly Deobandi mosque/madrasa in America?
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D Chronological map of Dwight York's Brooklyn institutions?
KEY
= Mosque / Islamic Center
= Organization / Movement
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= Compound / Complex
This atlas documents verified historical milestones to the extent possible with available public sources. Dates indicate founding or first established presence. Building construction dates may differ.

How to Read This Atlas

This document separates four things that are often collapsed in popular histories: (1) a community or organization being founded, (2) a congregation beginning regular worship, (3) a building being purchased or converted, and (4) a purpose-built mosque being completed. This distinction is essential because several institutions can each truthfully claim a different kind of "first."

- Green confidence: well documented in institutional, archival, governmental, or academic sources.
- Yellow confidence: broadly credible, but exact dates, addresses, or movement labels require further archival verification.
- Movement genealogy is distinguished from mere influence. For example, the Nation of Islam directly produced the W.D. Mohammed and Five Percent branches; Moorish Science and the NOI are treated as related milieus rather than a proven institutional succession.

Before 1900: the deeper background

The twentieth-century institutional story did not begin from nothing. Enslaved West African Muslims had lived in North America for generations. Arabic-literate figures such as Ayuba Sulayman Diallo, Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima Sori, Bilali Muhammad, and Umar ibn Said demonstrate a real Muslim African presence under slavery, even though slavery, forced assimilation, family disruption, and loss of institutions prevented most of these communities from maintaining continuous public Muslim institutions into the twentieth century.

A second strand was intellectual conversion. Alexander Russell Webb, a white American journalist and former U.S. consul, publicly represented Islam at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago and attempted to organize an American Islamic mission. A third strand was the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Black search for pre-slavery identity through Pan-Africanism, fraternal culture, and later Garveyism. This environment helped make Moorish and Islamic symbols intelligible as languages of recovered dignity and ancestry, even when the resulting movements were not orthodox Islam.

Source: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture - African Muslims in Early America

Source: Library of Congress / broader Webb historical collections can be searched here

Visual Master Map and Timeline

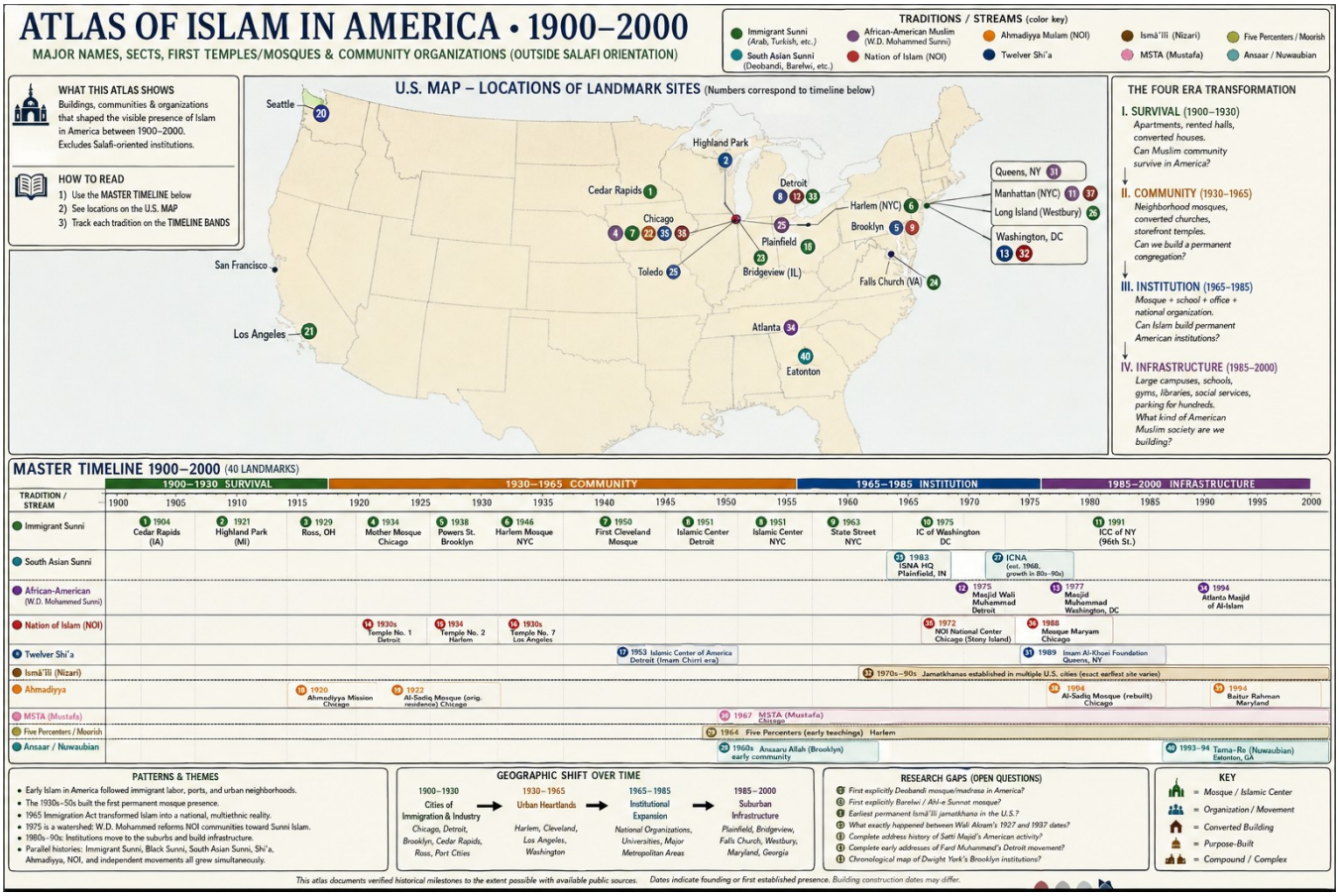
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Figure 1. Visual synthesis created for this atlas from the verified chronology below. It is a guide to the main institutional streams rather than a complete directory of American mosques.

Master Landmark Table

Date	Institution	City	Stream	Type / figures	Why it matters	Confidence
1906	Dzemijetul Hajrije	Chicago, IL	Bosnian Sunni	Benevolent/ religious society	Bosnian Muslims organized a mutual-aid and religious society; the Encyclopedia of Chicago describes it as apparently the oldest Muslim organization in the United States.	Green
1913	Canaanite Temple / Moorish Science beginning	Newark, NJ	Moorish Science	Noble Drew Ali	NYPL archives date the Moorish Science Temple movement to Newark in 1913. It combined Black nationalism with a religious philosophy drawing on Islamic and Christian	Green

					elements.	
1921	Highland Park Mosque	Highland Park, MI	Immigrant Muslim	Purpose-built mosque	Services began in June 1921 while construction was still underway. The congregation included multiple nationalities and involved Sunni, Shi'i, and briefly Ahmadi leadership. The institution collapsed and the property was sold in 1926.	Green
1922	Al-Sadiq / Wabash mission	Chicago, IL	Ahmadiyya	Mufti Muhammad Sadiq	The Ahmadi mission established a Chicago headquarters and mosque in a converted property. It became an important English-language missionary center, especially among African Americans.	Green
1929	Ross Mosque	Ross, ND	Syrian/Lebanese Muslim	Purpose-built mosque	One of the earliest purpose-built American mosques. Its original building did not survive; a later mosque was reconstructed on the historic site.	Green
1930	Allah Temple of Islam / Temple No. 1 lineage	Detroit, MI	Nation of Islam	W.D. Fard -> Elijah Muhammad	The Detroit community became Temple No. 1 of the Nation of Islam. It later settled at 11529 Linwood in 1959 and after 1975 became Masjid Wali Muhammad under W.D. Mohammed.	Green
1931	Powers Street Mosque	Brooklyn, NY	Tatar Sunni	American Mohammedan Society	A Lipka Tatar congregation purchased 104-106 Powers Street and adapted it for Muslim worship, creating one of New York's oldest enduring mosque communities.	Green
1934	Mother Mosque of America	Cedar Rapids, IA	Syrian/Lebanese Sunni	Purpose-built mosque	Completed in 1934. The National Park Service identifies it as the oldest standing mosque in North America; it is the safest candidate for "oldest surviving	Green

					purpose-built mosque" in the United States.	
1927/1937	First Cleveland Mosque	Cleveland, OH	African-American Sunni	Imam Wali Akram	Case Western sources conflict: one institutional history gives 1927 while Akram's biography gives 1937. The safest interpretation is that Muslim organization began in the 1920s and the independent Sunni mosque was clearly established by 1937.	Yellow
1939	Islamic Mission to America / State Street Mosque	Brooklyn, NY	African-American / interracial Sunni	Daoud Ahmed Faisal and Khadijah Faisal	Cambridge dates Faisal's reopening of the State Street mosque as the Islamic Mission to America to 1939. It became a major independent Black Sunni center and an important ancestor of Dar-ul-Islam.	Green
1940s-1963	Islamic Center of America lineage	Detroit/Dearborn, MI	Twelver Shi'a	Imam Muhammad Jawad Chirri	Detroit-area Shi'i community life dates to the 1940s. Chirri arrived in 1949; the Joy Road Islamic Center opened on September 20, 1963.	Green
1957	Islamic Center of Washington	Washington, DC	International Sunni-oriented	Diplomatic and immigrant Muslim leadership	A monumental national mosque project, formally dedicated in 1957, symbolizing Islam's public and diplomatic presence in the U.S. capital.	Green
1956	Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 7	Harlem, NY	Nation of Islam	Malcolm X / Elijah Muhammad	The Harlem institution at 102 West 116th Street became one of the most visible NOI temples under Malcolm X. After the W.D. Mohammed transition it became Masjid Malcolm Shabazz.	Green
1962-63	Dar-ul-Islam / Yasin Mosque lineage	Brooklyn, NY	African-American Sunni	State Street breakaway community	The Brooklyn Public Library traces Dar-ul-Islam to a 1962-63 break from the State Street milieu. It became a major African-American Sunni	Green

					network.	
1963	Muslim Students Association of U.S. & Canada	Urbana-Champaign, IL	Sunni-oriented institutional	Students from eleven universities	Founded at the University of Illinois in 1963. Its rapid campus growth helped generate later national organizations, including ISNA.	Green
1964	Muslim Mosque, Inc.	New York, NY	Malcolm X / Sunni-oriented	Malcolm X	Founded after Malcolm X left the NOI. It represents his attempt to build an explicitly Muslim organization independent of Elijah Muhammad.	Green
1964-67	Nation of Gods and Earths / Allah School in Mecca	Harlem, NY	Five Percent Nation	Clarence 13X	A direct NOI-derived movement. Its institutional form centered on street teaching, schools, and community spaces rather than conventional mosques.	Green
1968	Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)	North America	South Asian Sunni	Jamaat-i-Islami-influenced milieu	ICNA dates its origins to September 1, 1968. It became a major South Asian-rooted national organization in education, dawa, youth work, and service.	Green
early 1970s	Ansaaru Allah Community	Brooklyn, NY	Islam-derived / Dwight York	Dwight York	An evolving Brooklyn communal movement that used Islamic and Sufi imagery before shifting through Hebrew, Egyptian, Nubian, and esoteric identities.	Green
1972	NOI National Center / later Mosque Maryam	Chicago, IL	Nation of Islam	Elijah Muhammad -> Louis Farrakhan	The NOI purchased a former Greek Orthodox church on South Stony Island. Farrakhan later reestablished it as the national headquarters of the revived NOI and named it Mosque Maryam in 1988.	Green
1975 onward	Masjid Wali Muhammad	Detroit, MI	W.D. Mohammed Sunni	Former Temple No. 1	A direct institutional transformation from NOI Temple No. 1 into a Sunni congregation. The current site at	Green

					11529 Linwood was purchased by the NOI in 1959.	
1975-76	Masjid Malcolm Shabazz	Harlem, NY	W.D. Mohammed Sunni	Former Temple No. 7	The former NOI Temple No. 7 was reoriented toward Sunni Islam during the W.D. Mohammed reforms and renamed Masjid Malcolm Shabazz.	Green
1976	Islamic Center of Southern California, Vermont Ave.	Los Angeles, CA	Multiethnic Sunni	ICSC	The LA Muslim community moved into its Vermont Avenue center, illustrating the rise of the urban Islamic-center model.	Green
1981	Mosque Foundation	Bridgeview, IL	Arab-American Sunni	Suburban mosque	Designs were presented in 1977, construction began in 1978, and the Bridgeview mosque opened in 1981. It later expanded substantially as the community grew.	Green
1982-83	ISNA Headquarters	Plainfield, IN	Sunni institutional	MSA -> ISNA	MSA and related professional organizations reorganized as ISNA in 1982. The Plainfield headquarters complex was completed in January 1983.	Green
1983-91	Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center	Falls Church, VA	Multiethnic Sunni	Suburban Islamic center	Founded in 1983; a house served as the mosque for eight years. Construction of the current facility began in 1986 and it opened March 2, 1991.	Green
1988	Mosque Maryam	Chicago, IL	Revived Nation of Islam	Louis Farrakhan	The South Stony Island complex became the symbolic national headquarters of Farrakhan's reconstructed NOI.	Green
1989	Imam Al-Khoei Foundation	Queens, NY	Twelver Shi'a	Transnational Shi'i institution	The New York headquarters was established in 1989 and serves a multilingual Shi'i constituency with prayer, education, library, and social facilities.	Green
1991	Islamic Cultural Center of New York	Manhattan, NY	International Sunni-oriented	Purpose-built metropolitan mosque	A highly visible purpose-built mosque complex	Green

					marking Islam's permanent architectural presence in Manhattan.	
1993-94	Tama-Re	Eatonton, GA	Nuwaubian	Dwight/Malachi York	The Georgia compound represented the architectural culmination of York's movement away from its earlier Islamic/Ansaar identity toward Egyptian and Nubian esoteric symbolism.	Green

Each row is linked to a source in the detailed profiles and source appendix. The table is selective, not a directory.

Featured Site: Mother Mosque of America

Historical image of the Mother Mosque of America in Cedar Rapids. The modest domestic scale is itself historically significant: early American Muslim architecture often looked more like a neighborhood schoolhouse or meeting hall than the monumental mosque complexes built later in the century.

Source: Image source: The National, 2023 feature on the Mother Mosque

Source: National Park Service - Mother Mosque of America

Era I - Survival (1900-1930)

Early Muslim institutional life was usually modest: mutual-aid societies, rented rooms, converted houses, and small immigrant congregations. The core question was whether Muslim communal life could survive in the United States at all. At the same time, Black nationalist and identity-reclamation movements began using Moorish and Islamic symbols in new ways.

Representative landmarks

- Dzemijetul Hajrije (1906)
- Moorish Science beginnings (1913)
- Highland Park Mosque (1921)
- Ahmadi mission in Chicago (1922)
- Ross Mosque (1929)

Era II - Community (1930-1965)

The mosque and temple became neighborhood institutions. Immigrant Sunni mosques, Black Sunni congregations, Moorish Science, the Nation of Islam, Ahmadiyya, and organized Shi'i life existed simultaneously. Islam entered national public awareness through Malcolm X and through monumental projects such as the Islamic Center of Washington.

Representative landmarks

- NOI Temple No. 1
- Powers Street Mosque
- Mother Mosque
- First Cleveland Mosque
- State Street Mosque
- Temple No. 7
- Islamic Center of Washington
- Islamic Center of America

Era III - Institution (1965-1985)

Post-1965 immigration, campus organizing, and the transformation of the Nation of Islam created a dense national Muslim ecosystem. MSA became a major institutional engine, Dar-ul-Islam expanded, W.D. Mohammed moved large numbers of former NOI adherents toward Sunni Islam, and South Asian movements became increasingly visible.

Representative landmarks

- MSA
- Dar-ul-Islam
- ICNA
- W.D. Mohammed masajid
- Tablighi networks
- early Ansaaru Allah
- ISNA

Era IV - Infrastructure (1985-2000)

The defining form became the Islamic center: mosque plus school, offices, youth programs, social services, libraries, gyms, and large parking lots. Suburbanization became a major part of Muslim geography. At the same time, Shi'i institutions expanded, Farrakhan revived the NOI, and the York movement moved toward Nuwaubianism.

Representative landmarks

- ISNA Plainfield
- Mosque Foundation
- Dar al-Hijrah
- Al-Khoei Foundation
- Mosque Maryam
- Tama-Re

Major Institutional Genealogies

1. Independent African-American Sunni line

Satti Majid and early Sunni missionary activity -> Wali Akram / Daoud Ahmed Faisal -> First Cleveland Mosque and State Street Mosque -> Dar-ul-Islam and other independent Black Sunni communities. This line is crucial because it predates both Malcolm X's Sunni transition and W.D. Mohammed's reform of the NOI.

Source: Cambridge Companion - Laying the Groundwork for American Muslim Histories

Source: Case Western - Wali Akram

2. Nation of Islam and its direct branches

Fard Muhammad -> Elijah Muhammad -> Nation of Islam. From that direct institutional lineage came two major later forks: (a) Warith Deen Mohammed, who dismantled core NOI doctrines and moved the inherited mosque network toward Sunni Islam after 1975; and (b) Louis Farrakhan, who reconstructed the NOI around Elijah Muhammad's teachings. Separately, Clarence 13X left the NOI milieu and established the Nation of Gods and Earths / Five Percent Nation.

Source: Historic Masjid Wali Muhammad - institutional history

Source: Masjid Malcolm Shabazz - institutional history

3. MSA to ISNA

International Muslim students -> MSA (1963) -> rapid campus growth and professional organizations -> ISNA (1982) -> Plainfield national headquarters (1983) -> a large network of permanent Islamic centers, schools, conventions, and civic institutions.

Source: Oxford - Muslim Student Associations in North America

Source: Encyclopedia of Indianapolis - ISNA

4. Shi'i institutional development

Lebanese Twelver immigrants in the Detroit region -> Imam Muhammad Jawad Chirri -> Islamic Center of America (1963) -> broader post-1965 Twelver expansion among Lebanese, Iranian, Iraqi, and South Asian communities -> transnational institutions such as the Imam Al-Khoei Foundation in New York (1989). Isma'ili communities require a separate jamatkhana-based chronology and should not be collapsed into the Twelver story.

Source: Detroit Historical Society - Islamic Center of America

Source: Imam Al-Khoei Foundation - New York

5. Islam-derived identity movements

Moorish Science developed from an early twentieth-century Black nationalist and religious milieu in which Islamic and Moorish symbols were used to reconstruct identity. It should not be described as the organizational parent of the NOI, although the movements inhabited overlapping cultural terrain.

Dwight York's later Ansaaru Allah movement followed a different trajectory: it began with heavily Islamic forms and gradually moved toward Hebrew, Egyptian, Nubian, and esoteric identities, culminating architecturally in Tama-Re.

Source: NYPL - Moorish Science Temple of America collection

Source: Encyclopedia.com - Dwight York

The "First Mosque" Problem

There is no single useful answer unless the category is defined. The historical record supports several distinct claims:

- Oldest major organized Muslim society verified here: Dzemijetul Hajrije, Chicago, 1906.
- Very early purpose-built immigrant mosque: Highland Park Mosque, Michigan, 1921; it was short-lived and sold in 1926.
- Another exceptionally early purpose-built mosque: Ross, North Dakota, 1929; the original structure did not survive.
- Oldest surviving purpose-built mosque: Mother Mosque of America, Cedar Rapids, completed 1934.
- Major early converted mosque with long community continuity: Powers Street Mosque, Brooklyn, purchased 1931 by the Tatar congregation.
- Major early African-American Sunni institution: First Cleveland Mosque, with a 1927/1937 dating problem that remains worth archival investigation.

Source: Oxford - The Tragedy of Highland Park

Source: NPS - Mother Mosque

What the geography shows

Early Muslim institutions clustered around ports, factories, and immigrant labor corridors - Chicago, Detroit, Brooklyn, Cleveland, and small Midwestern settlements. By mid-century, Black migration made Harlem, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and other urban centers crucial laboratories of Muslim and Islam-derived movements. After 1965, universities and suburban professional settlement became equally important. Plainfield, Bridgeview, Falls Church, and Long Island represent the suburbanization of American Muslim life.

What the buildings show

Architecture tracks institutional maturity. The sequence runs from apartments and rented halls, to converted houses and churches, to modest neighborhood mosques, to monumental national mosques, to late-century Islamic-center campuses with schools, libraries, gyms, offices, social services, and large parking lots. The building therefore becomes evidence not only of theology but of class mobility, family formation, permanence, and demographic growth.

Open Research Questions

- What was the first explicitly documented Deobandi mosque or madrasa in the United States?
- What was the first explicitly documented Barelwi / Ahl-e Sunnat mosque in the United States?
- What was the earliest permanent Nizari Isma'ili jamatkhana in the United States?
- How exactly should Wali Akram's 1927 and 1937 dates be reconciled?
- Can Satti Majid's American addresses and organizations be reconstructed year by year?

- Can the earliest Detroit addresses of Fard Muhammad's movement be reconstructed from city directories and property records?
- Can Dwight York's Brooklyn institutions be mapped in chronological order before the move to Georgia?
- Which post-1965 mosques were the first to identify explicitly with Deobandi, Barelwi, Tablighi, Jamaat-i-Islami, or other South Asian currents rather than merely being ethnically South Asian?

Source Appendix and Shareable Links

The links below favor archives, government/public-history institutions, academic reference works, and institutional histories. Institutional histories are valuable for addresses and internal chronology but should be cross-checked when they make contested claims about founders, identities, or "firsts."

- Encyclopedia of Chicago - Bosnians
- Encyclopedia of Chicago - Muslims
- NYPL Archives - Moorish Science Temple of America
- NYPL Digital Collections - Noble Drew Ali and temple members
- Oxford Moving Stories - Highland Park Mosque
- National Park Service - Mother Mosque of America
- Case Western - Wali Akram
- Case Western - Islamic Religion in Cleveland
- Cambridge Companion to American Islam - Laying the Groundwork
- Detroit Historical Society - Islamic Center of America
- Oxford Academic - Muslim Student Associations in North America
- Historic Masjid Wali Muhammad - history
- Masjid Malcolm Shabazz - history
- Brooklyn Public Library - Dar-ul-Islam
- ICNA - history/about
- Islamic Center of Southern California - history
- Mosque Foundation - history timeline
- Encyclopedia of Indianapolis - ISNA
- Dar al-Hijrah - history
- Imam Al-Khoei Foundation - foundation history
- Archnet - Islamic Center of Washington
- Archnet - Mosque Maryam / NOI national center
- Smithsonian NMAAHC - African Muslims in Early America

Editorial Notes

This atlas uses "Sunni," "Twelver Shi'a," "Ahmadiyya," "Moorish Science," "Nation of Islam," "Five Percent Nation," and other labels descriptively to identify historical communities and their self-presentation. It does not imply that all listed movements are mutually recognized as orthodox Islam. Where a movement is Islam-derived rather than conventionally Sunni or Shi'i, that distinction is stated explicitly.

The chronology intentionally ends around 2000 and excludes the Salafi-oriented institutional history that was discussed separately. It is designed as a shareable foundation for later expansion, not as a complete census of American mosques.